

# ***Illinois LDC – Customer Service & Outreach***

*Illinois Commerce Commission 2020-2021 Winter Preparedness Policy Session*

*November 18, 2020*

*Julie DeSalvo*

*Manager, Credit and Remittance Operations  
MidAmerican Energy Company*



## Key Communication Themes

- Financial Assistance
  - Programs and support for low-income customers
- Customer Outreach
  - How we educate our customers
- Customer Safety
  - Winter safety advice, recommendations and support

## The Year 2020

- March 18, 2020 – Disconnection for non-payment stopped
- June 2020 – Stipulation Order Issued
  - Allowed for temporary, more flexible utility credit and collection procedures
  - Extended the moratorium for disconnections
  - Fees and late payment charges waived
  - Increased customer communication
  - Additional reporting requirements
- July 27, 2020 – LIHEAP season started
  - LIHEAP income guidelines increased to 200% of Federal Poverty Level
- September 2020 – Residential disconnections resume in most areas

# Financial Assistance

- LIHEAP/PIPP started July 27
- FY2020 – Illinois ranked fourth in Federal LIHEAP funding levels
- FY2020 – approximately 250,000 Illinois LIHEAP/PIPP recipients assisted with \$173.8M

NORTH SHORE GAS®  
We Keep Life Moving®

## Customer connection

Ideas, advice and news from North Shore Gas • May 2020




### Financial assistance available

You may be having trouble paying your natural gas bill as a result of COVID-19. Assistance is available through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and our Share the Warmth program for eligible customers, based on the last 30 days of income. Community Action Partnership of Lake County is now taking applications over the phone.

Sharing program 

Eligible customers can receive a Sharing Grant of either \$400 or \$450 after a \$25 good faith payment. To apply, contact a Salvation Army listed at [nicorgas.com/energyassistance](http://nicorgas.com/energyassistance) or call 773.205.3520

 Know what's below. Call before you dig.  Leaks, Odor or Emergencies 888.NICOR4U(642.6748)

 Ameren Illinois  
@AmerenIllinois

Funding is available through Illinois' Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to help income-qualified customers pay their energy bill. To apply, visit [spr.ly/6010GeFLo](https://spr.ly/6010GeFLo) or call 1.877.411.9276.



 MidAmerican Energy  
@MidAm\_EnergyCo

To support customers experiencing financial hardship or isolation as a result of the #covid19 pandemic, MidAmerican has temporarily suspended all disconnections for non-payment and will waive deposits or late payment fees. Learn more: [bit.ly/3daKmNe](https://bit.ly/3daKmNe)



At Your Service

# Financial Assistance cont.

- Ameren Illinois
  - Warm Neighbors Cool Friends
- MidAmerican Energy
  - I CARE
- Nicor Gas
  - Sharing Program
  - Nicor Gas Energy Aide
- Peoples Gas/North Shore Gas
  - Share the Warmth



**Warm Neighbors ♥ Cool Friends**

**Every year, as spring turns into summer and fall fades into winter, a season of need begins.**

Thousands of families struggle to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer:

- Elderly neighbors on a fixed income
- Families coping with job loss
- Single parents struggling to make ends meet

If you are in need, **Warm Neighbors Cool Friends** may be able to offer a helping hand. Our programs are designed to help low- to moderate-income customers of Ameren Illinois. Most of our clients do not qualify for other forms of assistance.

## HELP IS AVAILABLE

Whether you're having trouble keeping up with your energy bill or have special billing needs, there are a number of programs and services that may help.

### LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

Help is available for low-income households struggling to pay their energy bills. Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the State of Illinois, grants are based on the number of people in the household, total income, geographic location and the type of fuel used to heat the home. Energy assistance is provided by local community action agencies or not-for-profit agencies throughout the state. For more information, visit [LIHEAPillinois.com](http://LIHEAPillinois.com) or call 1.877.411.9276 (TDD for the hearing impaired: 1.800.526.0844).

### WARM NEIGHBORS COOL FRIENDS

The Warm Neighbors Cool Friends Program helps families in Illinois stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The program targets moderate income customers (those who normally do not qualify for government programs) and assists customers with both energy bills and weatherization in some areas. Primary funding sources include Ameren's Charitable Trust Foundation and customer and employee donations. To donate or learn more, call Ameren Illinois or visit [WarmNeighborsCoolFriends.org](http://WarmNeighborsCoolFriends.org).



## Sharing warmth – Sharing Program

Nicor Gas is committed to making a meaningful impact in the communities we serve. Since its inception, the Nicor Gas Sharing Program has provided financial assistance to more than 80,000 Illinois households.

### Nicor Gas Sharing Program

The Nicor Gas Sharing Program provides qualifying households with monetary relief for their natural gas bills. Eligibility is based on several factors, including household size and income.

The Nicor Gas Sharing Program is administered by the Salvation Army and funded through direct contributions from Nicor Gas customers and employees. Eligible customers can receive a Sharing Grant of either \$400 or \$450 after a \$25 good faith payment. To apply, contact a Salvation Army listed at [nicorgas.com/energyassistance](http://nicorgas.com/energyassistance) or call 773.205.9520.

Family Size	Minimum Gross Monthly Income	Maximum Gross Monthly Income 250%	Maximum Gross Monthly Income 300%
1	\$1,542	\$2,602	\$3,123
2	\$2,715	\$3,523	\$4,228
3	\$2,647	\$4,444	\$5,333
4	\$3,220	\$5,365	\$6,438
5	\$3,772	\$6,285	\$7,543
6	\$4,325	\$7,206	\$8,648
7	\$4,877	\$8,127	\$9,753
8	\$5,430	\$9,048	\$10,858

### Crisis situations and veterans

Special programs are designed for veterans and customers in crisis situations. For more information please contact your local Salvation Army or call 773.205.9520.

### Veterans

Eligible customers who are veterans may receive a grant up to \$200.00 in addition to LIHEAP funding. A good faith payment is not required for veterans program. Applicants must meet income guidelines for grant approval.

For more information, please contact the Salvation Army at 773.205.9520.

### Assistance for activated military personnel

Nicor Gas offers a package of benefits to assist activated guard and reservists who reside in our service territory. Call 888.Nicor.Gas (642.6748) for more information.

### Required Documents:

- Proof of income (check stub, Social Security letter or unemployment letter)
- Proof of Residence (photo ID, such as driver's license or state ID)
- Current Nicor Gas bill in applicant name
- Proof of \$25.00 payment of the date of application, and then their application should be processed

For additional information on all programs please visit [nicorgas.com/energyassistance](http://nicorgas.com/energyassistance)

### Salvation Army locations

427 E. Galea Blvd. Aurora, IL 60005 630.307.7245	300 3rd Ave. Joliet, IL 60433 815.726.4834
422 S. Main St. Berkshire, IL 60008 815.544.3902	540 N. Harrison Ave. Kankakee, IL 60901 815.539.8421
620 W. Washington St. Bloomington, IL 61701 309.829.7394, ext. 138	854 W. Foster Ave. Northridge, IL 60066 708.454.6220
2800 W. 127th St. Blue Island, IL 60406 708.833.0500	536 W. Madison St. Oswego, IL 60130 815.433.8990
502 N. Prospect Ave. Champaign, IL 61820 217.247.5742, ext. 24	103 N. Division St. Prestia, IL 60164 815.844.5005
2387 S. Laramie Ave. Cicero, IL 60804 708.222.0977	501 Broadway St. Quincy, IL 62401 217.222.0977
290 W. Crystal Lake Ave. Crystal Lake, IL 60014 815.455.2709	416 S. Madison St. Rockford, IL 61104 815.472.1035
830 Grand St. Dekalb, IL 60155 815.756.4348	1710 S. 9th Ave. St. Charles, IL 60154 630.377.7205, ext. 209
186 Douglas Ave. Elgin, IL 60120 847.741.2104, ext. 13	409 Avenue F Sterling, IL 61081 815.425.8622
1611 Sherman Ave. Evanston, IL 60201 847.864.3770	326 S. Bloomington St. Streator, IL 61364 815.472.2745
106 W. Exchange St. Freeport, IL 60132 815.235.7639	1 S. 405 Sunset St. Villa Park, IL 60081 630.429.3044
609 W. Dempster St. Des Plaines, IL 60016 847.981.9111	810 S. Green Bay Rd. Waukegan, IL 60085 847.396.9880

**Bill payment assistance available**

We understand that during these uncertain times, customers may be struggling to pay their natural gas bill. If you are having financial difficulties, or know someone who is, Peoples Gas has options to help. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides financial assistance to help customers with limited incomes pay their energy bills. Grants are also available through the Peoples Gas Share the Warmth Program.

**LIHEAP and Share the Warmth eligibility**

Eligibility and grant amounts depend on household size and the last 30 days of pre-tax household income before filing an application.

Household size	Maximum 30-day income
1	\$2,127
2	\$2,923
3	\$3,520
4	\$4,117
5	\$4,713
6	\$5,310
7	\$5,907
8	\$6,503

**Applicants are required to submit:**

- ✓ Proof of gross income for all household members over age 18
- ✓ Current residential heating bill
- ✓ Proof of Social Security numbers for all household members
- ✓ Medical eligibility card for any household member receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- ✓ Rental agreement, in instances where utilities are included in rent

The Community and Economic Development Association manages both programs and is taking applications by phone. To see if you are eligible or to apply, call 800-471-2332.

**Customer connection**

Identify, advise and refer from Peoples Gas

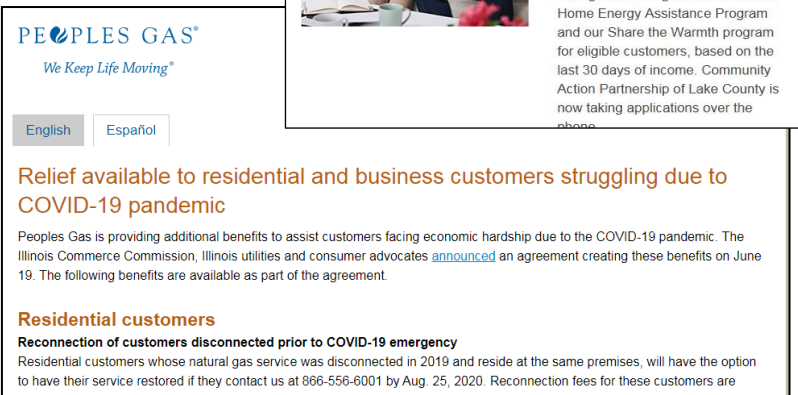
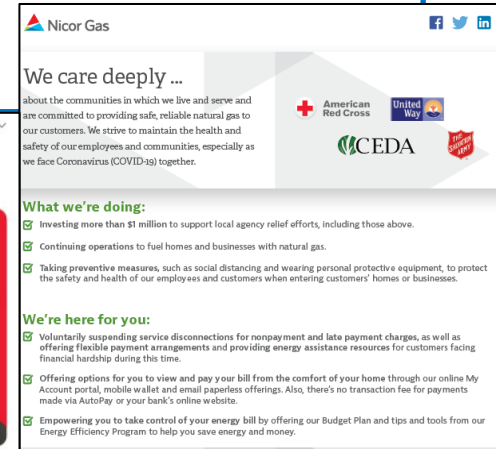
**inside**

Energy Action  
Monthly  
Third-Party  
Notification  
Bill payment assistance  
Budget Billing

**PEOPLES GAS**  
We Keep Life Moving™

# COVID Financial Assistance

- Ameren Illinois – Fresh Start
  - \$8M allocated
  - Grants up to \$700
- MidAmerican Energy – Bill Payment Assistance Program
  - \$275,000 allocated
  - Grants up to \$500
- Nicor Gas – Nicor Gas COVID-19 Bill Payment Assistance Program
  - \$7.5M allocated
  - Grants up to \$300
- Peoples Gas/North Shore Gas – Bill Payment Assistance Program
  - Peoples Gas \$12M
  - North Shore Gas \$1.175M




## Other Utility Programs

- Ameren Illinois
  - Residential Hardship Grant
  - Warm Neighbors Cool Friends
  - Ameren Illinois Military Support (AIMS)
  - Deferred Payment Agreements up to 24 terms
- MidAmerican
  - Deferred Payment Agreements up to 18 month terms
  - Reduced Down Payment
- Nicor Gas
  - Flexible Deferred Payment Agreements up to 24 month terms
  - No Down Payment
- People's Gas/North Shore Gas
  - Deferred Payment Agreements up to 18 months for non-LIHEAP
  - Deferred Payment Agreements up to 24 months for LIHEAP
  - No Down Payment

# Customer Outreach

**Ameren Illinois**  
July 28 at 8:13 AM · 🌐

The effects of COVID-19 have been far reaching, leaving many residents struggling financially. Our Fresh Start program is providing \$8 million to help qualified customers reduce or eliminate a past-due account balance.



AMEREN.COM

**Hardship due to COVID-19?**  
Get a fresh start

Learn More

**North Shore Gas Extends Relief During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Due to conditions surrounding COVID-19, we understand you may have had trouble managing your natural gas bill. Financial assistance programs such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, our Share the Warmth Program and a Payment Assistance Program are available to qualified customers in the North Shore area through the Community Action Partnership of Lake County (CAPLC).

**North Shore Gas extiende el alivio durante la pandemia COVID-19**

Debido a las condiciones que rodean COVID-19, entendemos que puede haber tenido problemas para pagar su factura de gas natural. Los programas de asistencia financiera, como el Programa de Asistencia de Energía para Hogares de Bajos Ingresos, nuestro Programa Share the Warmth y un Programa de Asistencia de Pagos, están disponibles para clientes calificados en el área de North Shore a través de la Asociación de Acción Comunitaria del Condado de Lake (CAPLC).


To enroll, contact CAPLC directly.  
Para inscribirse, comuníquese con CAPLC directamente.  
[caplakecounty.org](http://caplakecounty.org) or 847-249-4330

**NORTH SHORE GAS\***  
We Keep Life Moving®

We also have payment plans available, including deferred payment arrangements available in 18- and 24-month durations depending on your situation. Call us at **866-556-6004** to learn more and to enroll in these payment plans.

**NORTH SHORE GAS\***  
3001 Grand Avenue  
Wheeling, IL 60095

PRE-SORTED  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
MILWAUKEE, WI  
PERMIT #3817



También tenemos planes de pago disponibles, incluyendo arreglos de pago diferido disponibles en duraciones de 18 y 24 meses dependiendo de su situación. Llámenos al **866-556-6003** para obtener más información e inscribirse en estos planes de pago.

803-20855-616-01-MC-001

**MidAmerican Energy**  
@MidAm\_EnergyCo

To support customers experiencing financial hardship or isolation as a result of the #covid19 pandemic, MidAmerican has temporarily suspended all disconnections for non-payment and will waive deposits or late payment fees. Learn more: [bit.ly/3daKmNe](http://bit.ly/3daKmNe)




**Peoples Gas** @PeoplesGasCHI · Oct 14

We understand that many of you have experienced change from the health crisis. We're here to help you through this difficult time by:

- ✓ Suspending disconnections
- ✓ Providing flexible payment plans
- ✓ Connecting you to energy assistance

[wecenergygroup.com/home/message/p...](http://wecenergygroup.com/home/message/p...)

**Nicor Gas**

**Facing financial hardship due to COVID-19?**

At Nicor Gas, we want to make sure you find comfort in knowing that if you cannot pay your bill, we're here for you.

In addition to investing dollars to support local agency COVID-19 relief efforts, we also partner with these agencies to assist our customers struggling to pay their bill.


[Access available energy assistance funding](#)

You are a valued customer and your financial wellbeing is important to us.

**Nicor Gas's Post**

**Nicor Gas**  
2d · 🌐

Facing financial hardship? Rest assured we can connect you to available energy assistance funding and/or offer you a flexible payment arrangement to help you pay your bill. Learn More: <https://www.nicorgas.com/covid-19.html>



Like Comment Share

# Customer Outreach cont.



## Helping You Manage Your Energy Bills

Your wellbeing is central to every decision we make at Nicor Gas. As the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) continue to unfold, we are assessing the needs of our customers and communities to make sure we're providing all the support we can. If you're facing financial hardship due to COVID-19, we're here to help by connecting you to energy assistance, offering extended payment options and providing energy-saving measures.

### LIHEAP Energy Assistance Funding (CARES Act)

The federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps those in need pay their heating expenses. The federally funded assistance helps manage costs associated with home energy bills, weatherization and more. Open enrollment for the 2020-2021 Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) year begins July 27 for all eligible customers. Additional funds may be available through the CARES Act. For a list of local agencies [click here](#), or visit [nicorgas.com/energyassistance](#). For updates and additional information, call 877.411.9276 or visit [liheapillinois.com](#).

### Extended Payment Arrangements

To further assist our customers through the current effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nicor Gas is offering extended payment plan options up to 24 months for customers in need with no down payments. These measures are designed to help customers avoid service disconnections and lower monthly payments by spreading out costs over time. Visit [nicorgas.com](#) to establish a payment arrangement online.

### Energy Aide Program

The Nicor Gas Energy Aide program is administered by select local agencies. Eligible residential customers can receive an Energy Aide Grant up to \$250 toward their past due balance. This grant does not need to be paid back.

### COVID-19 Special Assistance

A special program component is available for customers who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This program will run until December 31, 2020. If eligible, customer can receive a grant up to \$300 toward their past due balance.

To find an office near you, please visit [nicorgas.com/energyassistance](#) for a list of agencies.

### Energy Assistance Resources



#### Sharing Program

Nicor Gas and our customers donate funding each year for the Nicor Gas Sharing Program, which is administered by the Salvation Army and offers bill payment assistance to residential customers in need.

Since the crisis began, Nicor Gas has worked with the Salvation Army to modify the eligibility criteria in order to assist more customers who may be experiencing economic hardship during this time.

Eligible customers can receive a Sharing Grant up to \$350 or \$400, based on the account balance. To apply contact a Salvation Army listed at [nicorgas.com/energyassistance](#) or call 773.205.3520 211 Illinois

211 Illinois helps to connect customers to energy assistance resources in their local area to help them pay their bills. Contact 211 Illinois (dial 2-1-1) for a list of local resources and funding available for emergency assistance. Help is available 24/7. Visit [Illinois211.org](#)

### Free Weatherization

Income-qualified households can receive weatherization assistance to save energy and money. Nicor Gas partners with Community Action Agencies and Community-Based Organizations to help income-qualified customers access affordable energy services and increase comfort in their homes. Free measures and upgrades may include:

- Air sealing
- Attic and wall insulation
- Furnace repair and replacement

Call 877.886.4239 or visit [nicorgas.com/freeweatherization](#) for more information.

## Keeping You Informed



August 19, 2020

To our valued customers,

As your trusted energy advisor, we take our responsibility seriously to keep you informed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the third in our series of tips to help you navigate through this challenging time.

### Protect Yourself from Scammers

Unfortunately, criminals may use this period of uncertainty to attempt to steal your money and your personal information. Posing as electric or natural gas company employees, scammers threaten to disconnect or shut off your power if you do not make an immediate payment by prepaid debit card or other non-traceable form of payment. Please know that Ameren Illinois representatives will never call, email or come to your door and demand an immediate payment. We will also never give you only one single payment option, such as the use of a pre-paid debit card, but always offer a variety of payment options. If you are unsure of who is contacting you, close the door immediately or hang up the phone and call Ameren Illinois at 1.800.755.5000. Stay vigilant and protect yourself.

### Keeping Cool and Keeping Costs Down

With more of us staying at home, home energy usage is on the rise. Ameren Illinois is focused on helping you improve your comfort, manage your energy usage and reduce costs while you remain safely at home.

To further our commitment, Ameren Illinois is partnering with smart thermostat manufacturers to provide residential customers with access to these smart thermostats at a drastically reduced price, and in some instances free of charge.

Smart thermostats are a great tool for customers to better manage energy usage and costs. If desired, settings can be adjusted on-the-go via a smartphone app. Many smart thermostat models can sense when residents are away from their home and automatically modify the temperature settings, further reducing energy usage. It is estimated that smart thermostats can help customers save up to 15 percent on their energy bills.

In addition to manufacturers' rebates, we are offering a \$125 discount on many models plus free shipping, resulting in significant savings for our customers. This limited time offer is valid until September 15 and only on the Ameren Illinois Marketplace at [AmerenIllinoisSavings.com/smart](#).

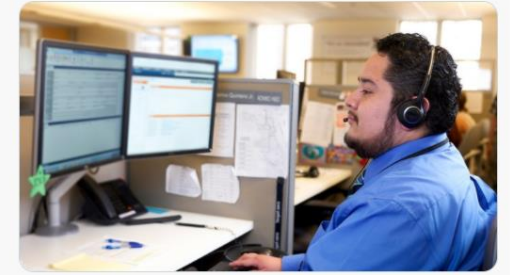
### Help Paying Your Energy Bill

If you are behind on your Ameren Illinois bill, the first step to recovery may be to apply for state funding through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This State of Illinois program has funding available for customers who meet the income requirements. Visit [HelpIllinoisFamilies.com](#) to find a community agency near you. Information on LIHEAP funding and bill payment assistance from Ameren Illinois can be accessed at [AmerenIllinois.com/Recovery](#).



Peoples Gas @PeoplesGasCHI · Oct 9

During this unprecedented time our commitment to serving our customers has never been stronger. Every hour of every day our customer service team is focused and following through to make sure you have reliable, affordable energy you depend on. #CustomerServiceWeek



MidAmerican Energy  
@MidAm\_EnergyCo

While places like store lobbies and shopping malls that normally house payment kiosks are closed, there are still other ways you can pay your bill. Your bill can be paid online with My Account, at any @WesternUnion walk-in location or by calling our payment line at 800-432-4524.



### Credit Counseling Assistance

If you or someone you know is having trouble paying bills, reach out to ClearPoint, a national, nonprofit credit counseling agency at 800.251.2227 (866.559.8198 for Spanish) or visit [credability.org](#). (Usted puede visitar la versión del sitio del sitio haciendo clic aquí.) [nicorgas.com/energyassistance](#)

Having trouble paying  
your energy bills?

We're here  
to help

### Extended Payment Arrangements

Visit [nicorgas.com](#) to set up a payment arrangement.

### Sharing Program

Administered through the Salvation Army, this provides a one-time annual grant toward payment of energy bills and does not need to be repaid.

To apply, contact a Salvation Army listed at [nicorgas.com/energyassistance](#) or call 773.205.3520

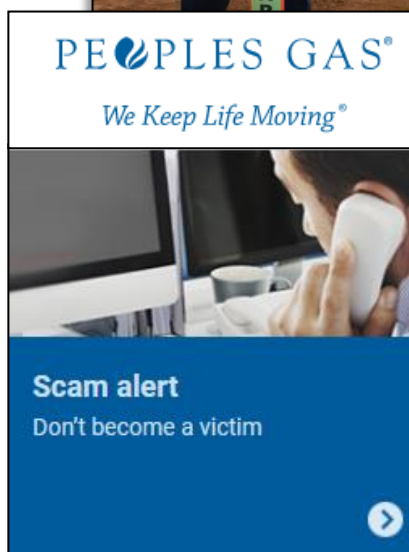
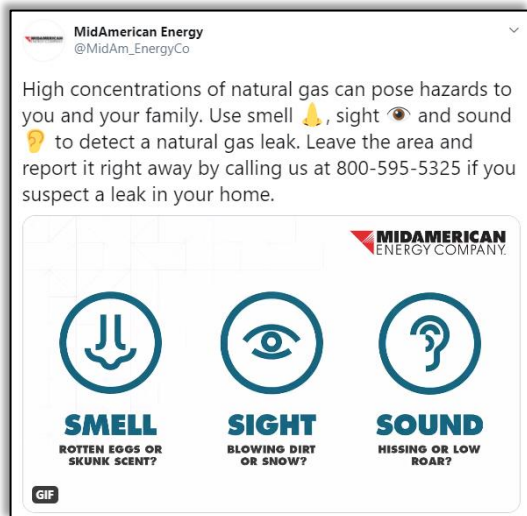


[nicorgas.com](#)

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# Customer Safety

- Fire prevention
- Carbon monoxide safety
- Gas and electric safety
- Utility companies warn customers about utility billing/payment scams using traditional and social media channels



## DON'T FALL FOR SCAMMERS PRETENDING TO BE UTILITIES



Ameren Illinois customers should be aware of telephone, mail, email, door-to-door, and other in-person scams in which criminals pose as Ameren representatives and demand immediate bill payment or personal information.

**If you think you have been contacted by someone impersonating Ameren:**

- Hang up the phone, or close the door, and call Ameren Illinois at **1.800.755.5000**.
- Never call a scammer back at the phone number they give you or use redial on your phone.
- Do NOT purchase a prepaid card, such as a Green Dot card, or provide any other form of payment that the caller or visitor is demanding.
- Never give out personal information such as bank account numbers, user names and passwords, credit card numbers, or Social Security numbers.
- If someone comes to your door and claims to be a utility worker, ask to see their employee ID and call us if you want to confirm the purpose of the visit.
- Delete all suspicious emails that require immediate action to verify or demand personal information.

For more information,  
visit [AmerenIllinois.com](http://AmerenIllinois.com).



# Questions

**MidAmerican Energy**  
@MidAm\_EnergyCo

Out of an abundance of caution, MidAmerican employees and contractors will continue to wear additional PPE when entering customers' homes and businesses to service gas and electric systems. Learn how we're keeping our customers and employees safe: [bit.ly/2xwxhxa](https://bit.ly/2xwxhxa) #covid19



**Peoples Gas**  
5,044 followers  
2mo •

Local partnerships are invaluable during difficult times. In the past few weeks, our employees gathered, packed and assembled more than 400 gallons of hand sanitizer from [Koval Distillery](#) to distribute to our essential crew memb...



73 • 2 Comments

**Ameren Illinois**  
September 26 at 10:34am

Summer temps are trying to hang on but fall is here. Now is a great time to schedule a furnace inspection to make sure your HVAC system is ready for this winter.



**Nicor Gas**

Local Gas or Emergencies: 888.Nicor4U (642.6748) | Call Before You Dig: Dial 811 | My Account | Spanish | Contact Us

COVID-19 | Residential | Business | Safety | Company | Community



COVID-19 News and Information